

REMARKS**Pending Claims**

Claims 1-16 are pending. Claims 1 and 2 have been amended. Claim 6 has been canceled. Amendments to claims 1 and 2 are supported, for example, by Figs. 2 and 13 and in Paragraphs [0072], [0073], and [0075] of the present specification as published.

Claim Rejections – 35 USC §102

Claims 1, 2, and 7 have been rejected under 35 USC §102(b) as being anticipated by Johnson (USPN 4,595,392).

Applicants respectfully submit that claims 1, 2, and 7 are not anticipated by Johnson for at least the following reason.

Claim 1 as amended recites as follows:

Claim 1 (currently amended): An interlabial product comprising:
an interlabial pad including a water-permeable surface side sheet, a back side sheet, and an absorbent body for absorbing body fluid disposed between the surface side sheet and the back side sheet; and
a cylindrical portion for inserting a finger therein,
wherein said cylindrical portion is formed by folding the interlabial pad in the longitudinal direction and attaching longitudinally opposing peripheral edges of the back side sheet from approximately the middle of the peripheral edges towards one end of the peripheral edges for inserting a finger in the longitudinal direction.

At least the bolded feature above is not disclosed, taught, or suggested by the cited prior art reference. The interlabial pad of claim 1 is folded and attached from about the middle towards one end of the peripheral edges of the back sheet to create a cylindrical portion for inserting a finger in the longitudinal direction. By having this configuration, the wearer can stably hold the interlabial product and apply it to the body without touching the water-permeable surface side sheet.

In contrast, Johnson shows an interlabial pad that is folded and secured with securement dots 4 to form a raised cylindroidal centrally disposed portion 3, in which the space between the

securement dots 4 disposed at about the center of the pad defines a region for inserting a finger or fingers orthogonally into the interlabial pad (see Fig. 3).

The interlabial product of claim 1 has a cylindrical portion formed by attaching the peripheral edges of the back side sheet from the middle towards the end for inserting a finger in the longitudinal direction.

For at least the foregoing reasons, claim 1 is not anticipated by Johnson. Claims 2 and 7 depend from claim 1, and therefore, they are not anticipated at least for the same reason as claim 1.

Claims 1-6 and 8-11 have been rejected under 35 USC §103(a) as being unpatentable over Rosenbluth (USPN 5,336,208) in view of Belecky et al. (USPN 5,672,165).

Applicants respectfully submit that these references do not render claims 1-5 and 8-11 unpatentable for at least the following reasons. (Claim 6 has been canceled).

The invention according to claim 1 states that the cylindrical portion is formed by folding the interlabial pad in the longitudinal direction and attaching opposing peripheral edges of the back side sheet longitudinally from approximately the middle towards one end of the peripheral edges. The interlabial pad is made of the surface side sheet, the back side sheet, and the absorbent body sandwiched by the two sheets.

In contrast, Rosenbluth shows in Fig. 22 a modified device 70 which has a finger hole 76. This modified device 70 is clearly different from the folded structure of the invention as set forth in claim 1. The addition of Belecky et al. does not compensate this deficiency of teaching in Rosenbluth. Given these two teachings, a person of ordinary skill in the art would most likely have attached the modified device 70 or the finger hole 76 of Rosenbluth to the underside of impermeable layer 40 of Belecky et al. The resulting structure would still be different from the

structure of claim 1 where the interlabial pad itself is folded to form a cylindrical portion for inserting a finger of the wearer therein.

For at least the reason above, claim 1 would not have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art. Dependent claims 2-5 and 8-11 would not have been obvious for at least the same reason as claim 1.

Claims 12-15 have been rejected under 35 USC §103(a) as being unpatentable over Rosenbluth in view of Belecky as applied to claims 1 and 2, and further in view of Farris et al. (USPN 6,131,736).

Because claims 12-15 depend from claim 1, these are not obvious for at least the same reason as claim 1 as set forth above.

In view of the above amendment, applicant believes the pending application is in condition for allowance.

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Respectfully submitted,

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